A NOTE ON THE LEVEL OF VILLAGE LIVELIHOOD IN THE UPPER RIO GRANDE AREA

Section of Human Surveys
Soil Conservation Service
Region Eight

July, 1937

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(1) See report on "Village Livelihood in the Upper Rio Grande Area".

Analysis of data on income in the Spanish-American villages of the Upper Rio Grande Area indicates that the gross incomes of almost two-thirds of all village families were under $600.(1) Monetary figures in themselves, however, provide only a rough indication of the standard of village living. The adequacy or inadequacy of the economy may be judged better by an examination of the actual substance and content of livelihood in the villages.

Available data, however, is extremely limited. No studies of consumption or standard of living have been conducted in the area. Those conducted in other rural areas are useful only for purposes of rough comparison because of the almost unique character of village life in the Upper Rio Grande Area. A limited amount of data on a small number of families has, however, been collected, which, while not definitive, may be used for purposes of illustration.

A single consumption group, or family, has been selected for illustrative purposes. This family includes four persons, two adults and two children, aged 12 and 9 respectively.

In its home, the Santa Cruz Valley, it is considered neither well-off nor poor. It is regarded as somewhat above the average in income. The head of this family considers himself independent and his income relatively satisfactory, as

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(1) See report on "Village Livelihood in the Upper Rio Grande Area".

do his neighbors. He has not left the area for seasonal labor since 1919, and except for a few months after the drought of 1934 has never either applied for or received any type of relief. Detailed data on the income and expenditures of this family were secured from records kept by the family head.

The family selected lives in a three room adobe house in Cuartelez in the Santa Cruz Valley. It owns 14 acres of irrigated land which are included in the Santa Cruz Irrigation District. Of these 14 acres, however, about 9 are water-logged and can be used only for vega and pasture. The remainder is in crops. The only livestock owned are two work horses. The vega and pasture is used to feed the two work horses, and to fatten the six wether lambs purchased each year for meat. In the base year 1935, as in every year but one since 1919, the family was dependent for its entire income upon the irrigated land. The crops and income from this land are indicated in the following table:

Crop	Acres	Cash Sales	Value Used At Home
Garden vegetables	0.25	$ 5.00	$ 20.00
Chili	1.00	156.00	62.00
Corn	2.00	0	90.50
Orchard	2.00	100.00	14.50
Vega and pasture	3.75	0	107.00
Total	14.00	$341.00	$294.00

The total income of the family was $635 with approximately half of it commercial income. Only a portion of the commercial income was received as actual cash; much of it was received directly in the form of goods at the trading store to which the surplus products were taken. A detailed list of the goods obtained in exchange for either surplus products or for cash follows:

1. Food

Lard, 90 lbs.	$20.25
Coffee, 45 lbs.	9.90
Beans, 200 lbs.	10.00
Potatoes 400 lbs.	8.00
Sugar 100 lbs.	7.50
6 wethers	12.00
1 hog	6.00
Soda 12 pkgs.	1.20
K. C. Baking Powder, 12 cans	3.00
Salt 100 lbs.	1.50
Flour 1,300 lbs.	40.60
	$122.15

2. Clothing

(a) For Wife

1 coat	$10.00
1 pair shoes	3.35
1 dress	4.98
1 dress	7.98
2 pair underwear	.76
3 house dresses	2.82
2 pair hose	.92
1 sweater	1.59
1 pair gloves	1.50
	$33.70

(b) For Men

3 workshirts	$2.00
2 overalls	2.14
1 pair work shoes	2.50
1 pair Sunday shoes	3.00
2 Sunday shirts	2.00
3 pair light weight socks	.72
6 pair gloves	2.22
1 straw hat	1.90
4 pair underwear	3.60
	$20.38

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(c) For Grandson		(d) For Granddaughter	
1 pair overalls	$1.57	1 coat	$3.49
1 pair shoes	2.00	1 dress	1.90
1 pair shoes	1.50	1 dress	1.79
1 suit	5.69	1 dress	.68
1 hat	1.50	1 hat	.83
3 pair socks	.55	2 pair hose	.20
2 underwear	1.34	1 cap	.35
3 workshirts	1.41	1 pair shoes	2.00
		1 pair shoes	.09
		2 underwear	.94
	$15.58		$13.23

3. Farm and Household Equipment

Gear	$2.85
Pinions	.65
Plate with rivets	.79
Pitman Woods	.50
Binder sections	.35
Knife head	.58
Pitman boxes	.62
Knife clips	.03
Rake teeth	1.80
Side grinder	6.50
Plow point	2.10
Wagon skins	4.20
Wagon ties	14.00
Oak Wagon spokes	7.20
Matches	1.20
Kerosene (12 gallons)	3.25
Kalsomine (4 packages)	3.00
	$49.77

4. Miscellaneous

Tobacco, candy	$9.00
School books	5.00
Medicines	4.00
Church	6.00
Interest on credit purchases (10%)	4.00
Trips for sale of produce and to Santa Fe	25.00
Local Fiesta	3.00
Other	4.00
	$60.00

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The only other expenditures were $25 paid to the Santa Cruz Irrigation District for water taxes and $3 paid to the county for county taxes. A summary of the cash expenditures follows:

Food	$122.15
Clothing	85.42
Farm and House Equipment	49.17
Taxes	26.00
Miscellaneous	60.00
Total	$341.34

The value of the food furnished by the farm was $293. If no value is assigned to the housing and fuel used by the family, for which no expenditure other than that of labor was made, then the total value of the goods used by the family was $634, food constituting $415 of the total. The percentages of the total value of the family living constituted by various types of goods are as follows:

Food	65%
Clothing	13%
Equipment	8%
Taxes	4%
Miscellaneous	10%

Examination of studies of farm family living in other sections of the country indicates that, in terms of total value of family living and the distribution of the total value among various types of goods, the level represented by this single family in the Upper Rio Grande Area is comparable with that of tenant and cropper families in the old South. The level indi-

cated by studies of family living of owner families in the South and of all types of families in other parts of the country is generally considerably higher.

No analysis of the content of the family living detailed above can be attempted here. It may be noted, however, that the adequacy of the diet is at least open to question. The clothing purchased is meager. The expenditures for education are at a minimum. There are no expenditures for health care, and just $4.00 for standard patent medicines. Recreational expenses hardly exist, and there are no savings of any type. Yet the living of this family is more ample than that of almost three-fourths of all village families in the area.

The per capita value of the living of the family used as illustration is $159. The average size of family in the villages is 5, according to sample surveys.(1) The total income necessary to provide the living detailed above for the average family is, then, $795. Surveys indicate that 64 per cent of all village families have incomes under $600, and 10 per cent incomes between $600 and $1,000.(1) It may safely be estimated, therefore, that almost three-fourths of all village families live at a level lower than that represented by the family whose living is detailed above.

It is estimated that there are approximately 15,300 Spanish-American and Indian families in the villages of the

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(1) See report on "Village Livelihood in the Upper Rio Grande Area".

Upper Rio Grande Area. To provide for each of these families a living similar to that detailed above, $796 per family or a total of almost $12,200,000 would be required. It has been estimated(1) that the total income of these families in 1936 was approximately $10,000,000, including $1,400,000 from relief. The size of the deficit, even assuming even distribution of income among all families is some indication of the problem of the native populations of the Upper Rio Grande Area.

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(1) "Village Livelihood in the Upper Rio Grande Area."